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Thirty-sixth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 2162 (2014), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) until 30 June 2015, and requested me to keep it informed of the situation on the ground and the implementation of that resolution. The present report provides an update on major developments since my report of 12 December 2014 (S/2014/892) and recommendations for extending the mandate of UNOCI.

II. Political situation

2. The political landscape in Côte d'Ivoire was dominated by preparations for the presidential election to be held on 25 October 2015, with political parties increasingly forming alliances and consolidating support. President Alassane Ouattara and his Government continued to take steps to advance political dialogue with the opposition with a view to easing political tensions.

3. Political dialogue between the Government and Front populaire ivoirien (FPI), the former ruling party, resumed on 29 December, within the context of the permanent framework for dialogue. Discussions focused on the release of persons detained for alleged violations committed during the post-elections crisis in 2010 and 2011, as well the unfreezing of the bank accounts and right of return to Côte d'Ivoire for persons affiliated with the previous regime living outside the country. In December and January, as a conciliatory gesture, a total of 63 detainees were released on bail. Out of the 659 persons detained in connection with the crisis, 321 remain in detention. On 21 January, the bank accounts of 31 associates of former President Laurent Gbagbo were unfrozen, including that of the FPI President, Pascal Affi N'Guessan. The Committee for the Restitution of Illegally Occupied Public or Private Sites reported that of the 1,037 claims it had received, as at 1 May 472 illegally occupied properties had been vacated and 155 claims were under consideration.

4. Broader political dialogue between opposition parties and the Government, which had stalled since May 2014, resumed on 29 January, covering issues of concern for opposition parties, including public funding of political parties, the status of the opposition and preparations for the presidential election. The

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Government agreed, on an exceptional basis, to finance political parties ahead of the election, dispersing as of 1 May CFA 1 billion, with 40 per cent allotted to FPI.

5. Meanwhile, political posturing and pre-campaign activities intensified. On 6 December, the executive board of Rassemblement des houphouëtistes pour la démocratie et la paix (RHDP) resumed its activities after three years of inactivity, with a view to strengthening the coalition for President Ouattara's re-election bid. Also in December, four members of Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), including the former President of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Charles Konan Banny, announced their intention to run in the presidential election. Those declarations were contrary to the "Daoukro call" of 17 September 2014 by the PDCI President, former President Henri Konan Bedié, for RHDP to mobilize behind President Ouattara as the sole candidate of the coalition.

6. Despite some resistance, the ruling coalition remained unified. On 28 February, PDCI held its fifth extraordinary congress in Abidjan, at which more than 98 per cent of delegates voted in favour of the "Daoukro call", thereby endorsing President Ouattara as the RHDP coalition's sole candidate and abrogating the decision taken during the October 2013 PDCI congress that the party would field a candidate. The four PDCI members who had announced their candidature boycotted the congress; the party advised them to run as independent candidates. On 8 March, President Ouattara announced that the ruling party Rassemblement des républicains (RDR) would merge with PDCI after the presidential election and that no change would be made to the Constitution prior to the election, including article 35, on the eligibility criteria for presidential candidates. There have been persisting calls within elements of the political opposition and civil society regarding President Ouattara's eligibility to run under article 35. On 22 March, RDR formally endorsed the candidacy of President Ouattara at an extraordinary congress. Subsequently, at a mass rally in Abidjan on 25 April, the President was further endorsed as the sole candidate of the RHDP coalition.

7. The former ruling FPI party faced deepening internal fissures, widening the divide between those supporting the leadership of incumbent party president Affi N'Guessan and those supporting former President Gbagbo. The fourth congress of FPI, which was to have transpired in December to elect the party president, was postponed, pending a ruling from judicial authorities on the eligibility of former President Gbagbo to contest the leadership of the party, as authorized by the FPI control committee. Following an application submitted by Mr. Affi N'Guessan, on 29 December a court in Abidjan invalidated former President Gbagbo's candidacy for procedural reasons. FPI senior leaders held a series of meetings between 22 and 26 January, seeking to find a solution to the party's internal crisis; however, as at 1 May, the divisions remained unresolved.

8. On 27 February, the FPI President made changes to the FPI general secretariat, which were challenged by some senior party members. On 5 March, the FPI control committee suspended Mr. Affi N'Guessan as president of the party, whom they considered responsible for the malaise within the party, and appointed FPI First Vice-President, Aboudramane Sangaré, as interim party president. On 7 March, Mr. Affi N'Guessan declared that he would challenge the legality of his suspension. On 3 April, the court declared Mr. Affi N'Guessan the sole representative and leader of FPI. On 11 April, Mr. Affi N'Guessan declared his intention to run for the presidency on the FPI ticket. To date, the party congress indicated by Mr. Affi

N'Guessan is yet to be held. However, despite being denied permission by the local authorities, the Sangaré wing of the party held its congress on 30 April in Mama, the hometown of former President Gbagbo, at which the former president was elected president of the party. On 4 May, senior members of FPI affiliated with Mr. Sangaré were arrested and detained in Abidjan.

9. On 6 December, the opposition coalition, Troisième voie, comprising seven parties and led by the President of Liberté et démocratie pour la république, Mamadou Koulibaly, convened a meeting in Abidjan, at which opposition parties and dissidents of the ruling RHDP coalition agreed to select a single opposition candidate for the election. On 18 March, Mr. Koulibaly announced that discussions were ongoing regarding the establishment of a broad coalition ahead of the election, which would include Troisième voie, the FPI faction supporting Mr. Sangaré and the four dissident PDCI candidates.

10. On 12 December, the deposed former President of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré, and his family returned to Côte d'Ivoire, after living for approximately three weeks in Morocco. The Ivorian Government has provided Mr. Compaoré accommodation in Abidjan. Following an announcement by Burkina Faso authorities that its nationals living in Côte d'Ivoire would not be able to vote in the October 2015 presidential election in Burkina Faso, on 13 February, Burkinabè nationals held a peaceful demonstration in Abidjan to assert their constitutional right to vote. There are approximately 4 million Burkinabè nationals residing in Côte d'Ivoire.

Election preparations

11. Following the expansion of the Independent Electoral Commission bureau from six to nine members, detailed in my last report, opposition parties resumed their participation in the Commission. On 4 December, a representative of the FPI-led opposition political coalition Alliance des forces démocratiques de Côte d'Ivoire was elected the fourth vice-president and two additional posts of deputy secretaries were filled by representatives of the opposition Rassemblement des peuples pour la paix and the ruling RDR, respectively. The representative of the opposition Mouvement des forces d'avenir also resumed participation in the work of the Commission, thereby ensuring the full operation of its executive office.

12. In accordance with the electoral timetable set by the Commission, the first round of the presidential election will be conducted on 25 October and the second round, if required, will be held on 22 November. As at 1 May, the electoral commission had established 512 local offices throughout the country, with support from UNOCI, and had established presences in 19 foreign locations to allow registered Ivorian citizens living abroad to vote. Data collection to update the voters' list will start on 18 May, with the aim of finalizing the list by 31 August.

13. On 2 April, the National Assembly adopted 16 amendments to the electoral legal framework, which were proposed by the Independent Electoral Commission. The changes include the right of voters to register and cast their ballot in the constituency of their choice on the condition that they reside, or have economic or social interests, in that constituency. As at 1 March, the national identity card became the key administrative document required for voter registration. However, given that the fees charged for the issuance of the card could be prohibitive for some

citizens, the Government is considering allowing voters to register using their nationality certificate.

14. In December, a United Nations-facilitated platform on elections comprising national stakeholders, including electoral officials and youth and women representatives, was launched in consultation with the Independent Electoral Commission. The platform, established in the context of my Special Representative's good offices mandate, aims to enhance dialogue among political actors, with a view to facilitating an environment conducive to an inclusive, transparent and peaceful electoral period. The United Nations also put in place a three-pronged coordination approach for electoral assistance, focused on strategic and political issues and technical and operational issues, as well as overall coordination and coherence. UNOCI has also begun to provide assistance to national authorities in developing Côte d'Ivoire's electoral security plan.

15. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will also implement an electoral assistance project that will cover enhancing conflict prevention; strengthening the capacity of the local commissions of the Independent Electoral Commission; promoting civic education; promoting women's participation in the electoral process; and training national security forces. The project is estimated to cost approximately $17.3 million. So far, UNDP has confirmed funding of $300,000 and the Peacebuilding Fund has confirmed $1.5 million, while pledges have been forthcoming from Germany and Japan.

National and international justice

16. Some progress was made in prosecuting alleged perpetrators of crimes committed during the post-elections crisis, including legal proceedings against civilian and military members of the former regime at the Abidjan Criminal Court and the Military Court. The Special Investigation and Examination Cell continued its investigation into serious crimes and human rights violations allegedly perpetrated by all parties during the post-elections crisis, though none have been brought to trial. Continued perceptions of "victor's justice" were fuelled by the prosecution of former President Gbagbo's supporters for committing crimes against the State.

17. On 26 December, hearings against former First Lady Simone Gbagbo and 78 other associates of former President Gbagbo accused of crimes against the State and other charges started at the Abidjan Criminal Court (2 of the original 83 accused died before the trial started, while 2 others evaded justice). Earlier, on 11 December, the International Criminal Court (ICC) rejected the challenge of Côte d'Ivoire to the admission of the case against Ms. Gbagbo before the Court and reminded the Government of its obligation to surrender her without delay. The Government requested ICC to suspend its decision, which was rejected on 20 January. On 10 March, the Abidjan Criminal Court rendered its verdict, finding Ms. Gbagbo and 59 of the co-accused guilty of undermining State security and related charges. Ms. Gbagbo, the former Commander of the Republican Guard, General Bruno Dogbo Blé and the former Commander of the National Navy, General Vagba Faussignaux, were each sentenced to 20 years of imprisonment and deprivation of their civic rights for 10 years. Overall, 32 prominent FPI figures are facing imprisonment and deprivation of their civic rights, and are therefore prevented from participating in political activities, including Michel Gbagbo and Mr. Sangaré.

Mr. Affi N'Guessan received a suspended sentence of 18 months. The defence lawyers and prosecution have filed appeals. The Court also awarded the State some $1.9 billion in damages from the convicted persons. Nineteen of the accused were acquitted.

18. On 11 December 2014, ICC confirmed four charges of alleged crimes against humanity, including murder and rape against Charles Blé Goudé, the former Minister of Youth and former Young Patriots leader. ICC decided on 11 March to combine the trials of Mr. Gbagbo and Mr. Blé Goudé, as the charges against both arose from allegations of crimes against humanity committed during the 2010-2011 post-elections crisis. As a result, ICC postponed the start of former President Gbagbo's trial, originally scheduled for 7 July.

19. On 9 March, the National Assembly adopted bills amending the Ivorian criminal code and criminal procedure code. Both laws were aimed at ensuring conformity of domestic criminal law and procedure to Côte d'Ivoire's international criminal and human rights legal obligations. The amendments include the abolition of the death penalty, the full domestication of all offences listed in articles 5 to 8 of the Rome Statute and the removal of the statute of limitations for prosecuting crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes. On 11 April, President Ouattara declared that the Ivorian judicial system was fully capable of trying perpetrators of crimes committed during the post-elections crisis; consequently, there would be no further transfers to ICC. Additionally, presidential pardons would only be granted to those who seek forgiveness from their victims and the Ivorian people.

20. On 16 March, the Abidjan military tribunal acquitted Major Gnawa Dablé, former Chief of Operations at the Abobo Commando Camp, and Sergeant Brice Eric Tano Kamana, who had been accused of having fired mortars in the Abobo neighbourhood in Abidjan, causing death and injury among the civilian population. The trial failed to address the facts, despite almost four years of investigations. The prosecution has appealed.

National reconciliation and social cohesion

21. On 15 December, the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission formally presented its final report and recommendations to President Ouattara. As at 1 May, the report had not been publicly released. The recommendations, which were drawn from national consultations involving a broad spectrum of the public, focused on the root causes of the crisis, the issue of reparations and the need for political, administrative and institutional reform. During its three-year tenure, the Commission collected 72,483 testimonies, of which 28,064 were from women and 757 from children. The Government began the implementation of some of the recommendations, including the establishment of a reparations programme for victims with an initial fund of approximately $18.5 million. On 24 March, President Ouattara issued an executive order establishing the National Commission for Reconciliation and Compensation of Victims, which is mandated to register all unidentified victims of the Ivorian crises and their entitled beneficiaries and propose compensation measures to repair the harm suffered or the restitution of property to all victims. The Archbishop of Bouaké, previously the Vice-Chair of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, was appointed President of the Commission.

22. In January, the National Programme for Social Cohesion developed a draft national reconciliation and social cohesion strategy, with support from UNOCI. The

strategy, which should be adopted by national stakeholders before the presidential election, aims to create a collaboration platform for national stakeholders involved in transitional justice and to enhance the coordination of reconciliation initiatives.

23. Intercommunal conflicts continued in the west, triggered by land issues, evictions from protected forests and the exploitation of natural resources. Priority was given to preventing local disagreements and skirmishes from escalating into full-scale conflicts. My Special Representative visited communities throughout the country to promote social cohesion and calm. UNOCI also supported traditional dispute resolution mechanisms and dialogue sessions targeting local authorities and the population, in particular youth groups. Intercommunal dialogue sessions were conducted in Divo/Lakota, Jacqueville, Korhogo, Man, Sinfra and Toulépleu, with an average participation of 200 persons, of whom 20 per cent were women.

24. On 28 January, UNOCI and UNDP initiated a pilot programme to support the Government efforts to build the capacity of local administrators and village councils in data collection and analysis of local conflicts, for monitoring and early warning purposes, with the objective of mitigating threats that could impact social cohesion. The pilot programme focused on community leaders and local authorities in the Abidjan, Guémon, Kabadougou, Marahoué and Sud-Comoé regions.

III. Security situation

25. The security situation in Côte d'Ivoire remained generally stable but fragile. Sporadic attacks and intercommunal clashes persisted in the west, near the border with Liberia, while violent crimes such as armed robbery, banditry and home invasions were reported in Abidjan and other parts of the country. Demonstrations and strike actions were frequent during the period under review, involving civil servants such as teachers and prison guards protesting against conditions of service, as well as students, youths and former combatants with various grievances. Three jailbreaks were recorded between 1 December and 1 May, demonstrating weaknesses in the corrections sector. With the presidential election approaching, the lack of equipment for public order maintenance for Ivorian law enforcement and security forces remained a challenge to their operational capabilities. Incidents involving undisciplined elements of the Force Républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI), former combatants and *dozos* (traditional hunters), while still serious, declined.

26. On 4 January, FRCI soldiers arrested six persons in Gobele, near Tabou, in the southwest of the country, who had arrived by boat from Ghana, allegedly with the intention of attacking Tabou. FRCI seized materiel, including grenades, maps and an attack plan.

27. On 10 January, approximately 15 unknown assailants simultaneously attacked FRCI positions in Dahioké and Grabo, resulting in the death of 2 FRCI soldiers and 1 assailant, as well as the displacement of 1,600 civilians.

28. On 16 January, a group of armed assailants raided the village of Irato, near Olodio on the Cavally River, and abducted nine civilians. Irato was also attacked on 11 and 13 January. A team subsequently deployed by UNOCI to Grabo and Irato found the situation to be highly volatile. On 24 February, two Burkinabè were found shot and burned in Irato.

29. Also on 16 January, a cache of weapons and ammunition was found in a private residence near Bouaké. UNOCI supported Ivorian security forces in recovering 20 anti-armoured rockets, 10 anti-personnel rockets, one mortar, assorted ammunition and 11 other weapons.

30. Between 1 December and 1 May, over 20 child abductions were reported in Abidjan, with only 1 child found alive. The bodies of most of the other victims showed signs of mutilation and/or dismemberment. National security forces increased patrolling, and arrested one alleged perpetrator.

IV. Regional issues

31. The situation in the area bordering Liberia remained generally stable, notwithstanding the incidents near the border described in paragraphs 26 to 28 of the present report. As at 1 May, Côte d'Ivoire's borders with Guinea and Liberia remained closed as a precautionary measure against the Ebola virus disease, which had most severely impacted those countries and Sierra Leone. Though no case of Ebola has been reported in Côte d'Ivoire, the Government continued its efforts to strengthen its prevention, preparedness and response capacity, working with partners such as the World Health Organization. As a consequence of the border closures, joint security operations involving the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and UNOCI, as well as the Liberian and Ivorian security agencies, remained suspended, though information-sharing between the two missions continued.

32. On 10 March, the third quadripartite meeting involving the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, together with UNOCI and UNMIL, was held in Abidjan. The meeting provided an opportunity to strengthen bilateral cooperation and improve border security, as well as to follow up on agreements reached at the June 2012 and April 2013 quadripartite meetings. While both Governments expressed satisfaction with improvements in the security situation, they acknowledged continuing fragility in the border areas. The parties agreed to regular cross-border meetings and sharing of information between the security agencies of both countries and also decided to resume ground and river patrols jointly with UNMIL and UNOCI along the border. It was also agreed to hold the sixth meeting of the Liberia-Côte d'Ivoire joint commission for bilateral cooperation and a second meeting of the joint council of chiefs and elders.

33. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2153 (2014), UNOCI continued to coordinate with the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire, including with respect to the monitoring of the arms embargo, and also worked closely with Ivorian customs authorities.

V. Reform of security institutions

34. Efforts continued to accelerate the implementation of the National Security Sector Reform Strategy adopted in September 2012, with emphasis on decentralization and national ownership. However, challenges remained in building the operational capacity of national security providers. FRCI continued to face institutional gaps in terms of training, discipline and low public confidence. The police and the gendarmerie, while deployed throughout the country, continued to

face operational shortcomings hampering implementation of law enforcement tasks and other core responsibilities, in addition to lack of equipment, as noted in paragraph 25. Following the November 2014 protests by FRCI elements, the Government made efforts to address outstanding grievances, constructing barracks and paying retroactive salaries. On 14 January, the Government announced that non-commissioned officers could not obtain command positions within FRCI without a military diploma certifying they have undergone service-specific and combat training, a measure intended to improve professionalism within the defence forces.

35. The Government commitment to reorganize the army led to the enactment of legislation on the Organization of National Defence and the Ivorian Armed Forces on 9 March, which would further professionalize FRCI by defining clear criteria for promotion, social benefits and retirement. UNOCI provided technical support to the members of the National Assembly Defence and Security Commission, particularly on democratic oversight. This new defence bill, which replaces a prior law from 1961, would enhance the effectiveness and governance of the defence sector by harmonizing conditions for general mobilization, recognizing the key role of the National Security Council on defence matters, establishing a defence coordination committee, and regulating the conditions for military intervention in law enforcement and rescue operations.

36. In February, the Government, with support from UNOCI, approved a national training plan for the gendarmerie between 2015 and 2019. The Government also continued its efforts to improve gender balance in the gendarmerie, including women in the gendarmerie-training academy. The Peacebuilding Fund supported an infrastructure project that would provide appropriate accommodation for female recruits.

37. In December 2014, security committees comprising representatives of civil society, national security institutions and local government representatives, which are charged with security sector reform implementation at the local level, were established in the Indenié and Mé regions by the National Security Council with support from UNOCI. Efforts were also made to establish a vetting mechanism for the police and gendarmerie. Quick-impact projects supported a police station in Tiebissou, as well as gendarmerie brigades in Abengourou, Divo, Fresco, Guitry, Lakota and Satama-Sokourou.

38. In the framework of the West Africa Coast Initiative project, UNOCI, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and national partners worked towards the operationalization of the newly established transnational crime unit.

VI. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

39. The national Authority for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration announced that, as at 1 May, 50,121 former combatants, including 3,780 women, had been disarmed and demobilized and had received reinsertion support. A revised total number of 64,000 former combatants would complete the process by 30 June 2015. To meet that deadline, there was a significant overall increase in the enrolment of former combatants into the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. However, the continuing influence of former zone commanders has remained a persisting challenge, including to the disarmament,

demobilization and reintegration process, as noted in the report of the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire of 13 April 2015 (S/2015/252).

40. Between 1 December and 1 May, the Authority conducted 136 disarmament and demobilization operations with the support of UNOCI and the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), with the latter destroying 474 weapons. During that period, 4,374 former combatants, including 398 women, handed over 377 weapons, 349,138 rounds of small arms ammunition and 1,814 items of explosive ordnance. Most participants were associates of FRCI or former Forces nouvelles elements.

41. A total of 45,685 former combatants have been reintegrated, while 11,541 were in reinsertion programmes as at 1 May. UNOCI assisted the Government reinsertion efforts, implementing 79 community-based reinsertion projects aimed at the enhancement of community safety and social cohesion, the reinforcement of the weapons collection programme and the payment of transitional safety allowances to 44,542 former combatants.

42. In an effort to reach its goal of enrolling all former combatants in the disarmament and demobilization programme by 30 June 2015, the Authority intensified its sensitization activities. Meanwhile, UNOCI and UNMAS supported the implementation of 10 community violence reduction programmes in the west for 1,660 people, including 520 women. There were reports of an increased presence of former combatants in the west of Côte d'Ivoire, as well as in Bouaké, where participation in disarmament and demobilization operations continued to be low. UNOCI also continued to work with the Authority to develop its approach to post-June 2015 reinsertion activities.

43. The National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons, with the support of UNMAS, conducted seven weapons civilian disarmament collection operations, collecting 272 weapons and 514 small arms ammunition. As at 1 May, Government statistics indicated that a total of 29,071 weapons, including 8,864 grenades, 2,872 items of explosive ordnance and 1,585,507 rounds of ammunition, had been collected. In January 18 tons of destroyed weapons were formally handed over to a smelting factory for transformation into public construction material. UNMAS assisted the Government in the construction or rehabilitation of five storage sites for weapons and ammunition, and the destruction of 51 items of unexploded ordnance. Additionally, UNMAS conducted weapons and ammunition management training for 22 members of the police, gendarmerie and army. The Commission published guidelines on procedures for physical security and stockpile management of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, as well as standardized training modules, based on international protocols, with support from the United Nations.

VII. Human rights

44. The human rights situation was characterized by reports of arbitrary arrest, illegal detention, ill treatment, racketeering, extortion and sexual- and gender-based violence against women and children. Between 1 December and 1 May, FRCI, some gendarmerie, police and other State agents were reportedly involved in one extrajudicial killing, cases of torture and ill treatment against 35 people and cases of arbitrary arrest and illegal detention of 46 people. The low rate of judicial or disciplinary actions against alleged perpetrators remained a concern.

45. On 24 March, Mohammed Ayat, the new Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Côte d'Ivoire, submitted a report to the Human Rights Council in which he emphasized that, notwithstanding progress made by the Ivorian Government with respect to the protection of human rights, more was required to ensure the prosecution of all persons responsible for violations of human rights regardless of their political affiliation. Also in March, compliance by Côte d'Ivoire with its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was reviewed by the Human Rights Committee, which published its concluding observations on 31 March. The Committee made recommendations regarding the mandate and independence of the National Human Rights Commission, and recommended that the report of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission be made public.

46. Detainees in prolonged pretrial detention continued to face difficult circumstances, prompting 150 persons detained at the central civilian prison of Abidjan in connection with the post-elections crisis to start a hunger strike on 1 December, as indicated in my last report. The hunger strike ended on 25 December, following an intervention by my Special Representative.

47. On 8 April, with UNOCI support, the National Human Rights Commission of Côte d'Ivoire launched a national observatory for monitoring human rights during the electoral process. UNOCI provided assistance to the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Public Liberties in following up on recommendations made in the context of the universal periodic review, including by convening a workshop in Abidjan on 17 December.

Child protection

48. Between 1 December and 1 May, 64 rape cases against girls aged 2 to 16 years were documented, 8 of which were allegedly perpetrated by State agents. Reports were received during the same period of 28 girls who were victims of female genital mutilation and two attempted forced marriages. The number of reported cases of all types of violations decreased from the previous reporting period.

49. On 12 February, UNOCI intervened to secure the removal of a checkpoint controlled by FRCI elements at the entrance of the primary school in the Godjiboué village, near San Pedro, affecting children's right to education.

Sexual violence

50. Between 1 December and 1 May, the United Nations verified 80 rapes and other sexual abuses, including 9 gang rapes and 1 attempted gang rape, including 67 perpetrated against children, fewer reported cases than the prior reporting period. The main challenge in the fight against sexual violence remained the low rate of adequate prosecution of alleged perpetrators by the national judicial system. Out of the 80 cases, 31 alleged perpetrators were arrested and detained, but only 10 were tried and sentenced for "indecent assault" by domestic courts, with prison sentences ranging from 3 months to 10 years. Others were released for lack of evidence, withdrawal of complaints by victims or non-attendance at court hearings by victims fearing retaliation. Most victims continued to resort to traditional mechanisms to settle cases.

51. In December, UNOCI conducted activities to strengthen the capacity of civil society actors and personnel at the six legal aid clinics on accountability on sexual violence. With a view to supporting the implementation of the action plan developed by the committee of national experts on conflict-related sexual violence, UNOCI assisted the committee with the sensitization of FRCI at the Open Day events on human rights and international humanitarian law, held in Abidjan from 4 to 6 December, at which the Prime Minister and the FRCI Chief of Staff reiterated their commitment to fight impunity for conflict-related sexual violence.

Gender

52. On 2 March, while inaugurating the Conseil national de la femme, President Ouattara committed to consolidating the rights of women and enhancing their participation in building democracy, in line with efforts by the African Union and in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. The President also launched a compendium of women with the professional credentials to be members of decision-making bodies and to contribute to Côte d'Ivoire's socioeconomic development of Côte d'Ivoire.

53. UNOCI and non-governmental organizations in the Bouaké area organized training and awareness-raising activities for more than 1,700 people in the regions of Gbeke and Hambol to promote the participation of women and youth in elections.

HIV/AIDS

54. Between 1 December and 1 May, UNOCI sensitized 7,317 persons on HIV/AIDS prevention and provided voluntary counselling and testing for 1,158, including 656 former combatants. A further 1,935 individuals, including returnees and community members, were sensitized on HIV/AIDS and sexual violence. On 18 December, the President chaired the fifth session of the National Council for the Fight against HIV/AIDS in Abidjan, at which he indicated that HIV/AIDS prevalence in Côte d'Ivoire had decreased from 3.7 per cent in 2012 to 2.7 per cent in 2014.

VIII. Media

55. Some media outlets continued to disseminate incendiary information and hate speech. UNOCI intensified efforts to strengthen professionalism, media ethics and responsible journalism with a view to promoting an environment conducive to peaceful elections. On 26 February, UNOCI launched, in cooperation with the Minister for Higher Education, a sensitization campaign at University Felix Houphouët-Boigny in Abidjan, which was subsequently extended to six other universities and two high schools. ONUCI-FM radio programmes continued to promote political dialogue and national reconciliation.

IX. Economic situation

56. The economy of Côte d'Ivoire continued its upward trend, with a growth rate of 9.1 per cent in 2014, up from 8.1 per cent in 2013. Growth was driven by the manufacturing and services sectors, as well as increases in national consumption

and stock prices. External accounts also improved, as well as the trade balance, by more than 2.4 per cent. Foreign direct investment rose, reaching $730 million in 2014. International confidence was also demonstrated by the achievement of the threshold of the United States foreign aid agency, the Millennium Challenge Corporation. The level of external debt also continued to improve, remaining below the threshold of the convergence ratio for Union économique et monétaire ouest-africaine, as well as the debt sustainability scenario of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Job creation was driven by the agricultural and services sectors, which created a total of some 110,000 jobs in 2014.

57. Côte d'Ivoire registered strong performance on its programme delivery for IMF, which conducted a review from 18 March to 2 April of the country's economic and financial programme supported by an arrangement under the extended credit facility. In February, Côte d'Ivoire issued a $1 billion Eurobonds at a yield of 6.625 per cent, which was four times oversubscribed. The country is sub-Saharan Africa's second-largest issuer of bonds, after South Africa, with total stock amounting to $4.25 billion.

58. An International Conference on the Emergence of Africa took place in Abidjan between 18 and 20 March under the chairmanship of President Ouattara, organized jointly with UNDP and in close partnership with the African Development Bank and the World Bank, which aimed to promote sharing of experiences. The Declaration of Abidjan adopted on 20 March covered priority areas, and plans are in place to establish a follow-up mechanism and a high-level committee.

X. Humanitarian situation

59. As at 31 March, 38,121 Ivorian refugees had been registered by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Liberia, while 19,433 remained in other countries in West Africa. Throughout the period under review, the facilitated voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees in Guinea and Liberia was suspended at the request of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire as a preventive measure in the context of the Ebola outbreak. On 12 March, the tripartite commission comprising the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia and UNHCR recommended resuming voluntary repatriation activities.

60. An estimated 300,000 civilians remained displaced within Cote d'Ivoire as at 1 May. The armed attacks described in paragraphs 26 to 28 triggered the displacement of nearly 3,000 people, mostly women and children, while land disputes in Bas Sassandra, Cavally and Montagnes contributed to the displacement of some 150 people. Humanitarian actors provided those displaced with water, health care, sanitation, food and non-food items to supplement the assistance provided by the national authorities.

61. A Government-led 2014/15 humanitarian strategy and action plan were finalized, which addresses residual humanitarian needs in the country. Of the $37.5 million required to cover needs in 2014, only $19.7 million was funded. A further $53.4 million is required to carry out humanitarian and early recovery programmes in 2015.

62. From 23 to 25 February, UNHCR and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) held a ministerial-level regional conference on

statelessness in Abidjan, which was attended by President Ouattara and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. In a final statement signed by all 15 ECOWAS member States, a commitment was made to address the issue in the region within 10 years. An estimated 750,000 stateless people live in Côte d'Ivoire.

XI. Deployment of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

Military component

63. As at 1 May, the strength of the UNOCI military component stood at 5,644 personnel, comprising 5,375 troops (including 5 infantry battalions, a quick reaction unit and enablers), 92 staff officers and 177 military observers, out of an authorized strength of 7,137 personnel. Women represent 1.5 per cent of the force. More than half of the UNOCI force is deployed in the west.

64. Pursuant to resolution 2162 (2014), reducing the authorized strength to 5,437 military personnel by 30 June 2015, UNOCI had withdrawn a total of 1,987 troops by 1 May, including infantry (1,280), engineering units (273), transport (300), a light utility aviation unit (104) and signals (30). An additional 256 troops are scheduled to repatriate in June. The force was also augmented with 543 new personnel, including 195 required to transform the force reserve into the quick response force detailed in paragraph 65, 85 to generate a medium utility aviation unit and a 263-strong military task force for the east. Meanwhile, the UNOCI force continued to reconfigure, with a view to enhancing mobility and concentrating on high-risk areas, while reducing its presence in the east and moving to a pre-emptive posture in order to implement its protection of civilians mandate within its areas of deployment and capabilities. Since my last report, the force conducted 165 training operations focused on active deterrence, protection of military effect and enhanced rapid response. No further reduction of the UNOCI military component is recommended until after the conclusion of the electoral period.

Regional quick reaction force

65. The 650-strong quick reaction force authorized by the Security Council in its resolution 2162 (2014) is fully operational to implement the mandate of UNOCI, while also able to temporarily reinforce UNMIL in the event of a serious deterioration of the security situation in Liberia. As at 24 April, the concept and mechanisms of the quick reaction force had been successfully validated and tested. Operational readiness will continue to be developed with further training, cooperation and preparation.

French forces

66. The 450-strong French forces, or Licorne, announced the end of its 12-year operation in Côte d'Ivoire on 21 January 2015. At the same time, the Forces françaises en Côte d'Ivoire, comprising around 580 troops, were established, with the primary mandate of implementing bilateral military cooperation in the framework of the defence partnership agreement that was signed between Côte d'Ivoire and France in 2012. By its resolution 2162 (2014), the Security Council had extended until 30 June 2015 authorization for the French forces to provide support to UNOCI, within the limits of the force's deployment and capabilities. Such support to UNOCI continues to be necessary, particularly during the electoral

period, and should therefore be formalized in a new memorandum of understanding. Collaboration already exists with respect to assisting FRCI in elaborating its electoral security plans, and tripartite meetings bringing together FRCI, UNOCI and the French forces continued on a bimonthly basis.

Police component

67. As at 1 May, the strength of the UNOCI police component stood at 1,494 personnel, out of an authorized strength of 1,500, including 495 individual police officers and 6 formed police units deployed in Abidjan (2), Bouaké, Daloa, Guiglo and Korhogo. Women represent 10 per cent of the police component.

68. Adjustments were made to the areas of responsibility of the UNOCI formed police units to enhance their operational capacity and mobility. These units will continue to support the national security forces and help mitigate security vacuums in areas vacated by the UNOCI force, focusing on public order management, crowd control and operational support. United Nations police also support and advise national law enforcement and security forces, including through the conduct of joint patrols, mentoring, training and co-location activities at police stations and gendarmerie brigades countrywide, and will focus in particular on supporting the development and implementation of the national electoral security plan. No further reduction of the UNOCI police component is recommended until after the conclusion of the electoral period.

Conduct and discipline

69. UNOCI continued to work towards full compliance with my zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and other misconduct. No allegations of sexual misconduct against any UNOCI uniformed or civilian staff member were recorded during the period under review.

Protection of civilians

70. In line with the implementation of the United Nations protection of civilians strategy, an assessment of civilian threats and vulnerabilities was conducted to identify hotspots, which will inform the protection of civilians capability of all United Nations entities working in Côte d'Ivoire during the electoral period. During the period under review, 50 United Nations personnel were trained on protection of civilians. UNOCI also provided training on protection of civilians to 64 members of the national security and defence forces.

XII. Safety and security of United Nations personnel

71. Criminality and traffic accidents presented the greatest risks to the safety and security of United Nations personnel. Between 1 December and 1 May, one United Nations staff member was murdered, one was the victim of armed robbery and two were victims of vehicular break-ins. Nine UNOCI military personnel died in separate car accidents on 27 January and 3 February. On 8 March, the body of a UNOCI national staff member who had been shot dead was discovered in Bouaké; the national police, with support from UNOCI, are investigating. In addition, one military member died from natural causes on 2 March, as did two police personnel, on 8 March and 20 April, respectively.

XIII. Financial implications

72. My proposed budget for the maintenance of UNOCI for the period from 1 July 2015 to June 2016 in the amount of $418.2 million has been submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration and approval during the second part of its resumed sixty-ninth session. Should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNOCI beyond 30 June 2015, the cost of maintaining UNOCI would be limited to the amounts approved by the General Assembly for the 2015/2016 financial period.

73. As at 22 April 2015, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNOCI amounted to $126.7 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to $2,160.3 million.

74. Reimbursement to contributing Governments for troop and formed police costs, and contingent-owned equipment costs, has been made for the period up to January 2015 and December 2014, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

XIV. Observations

75. In October 2015, the people of Côte d'Ivoire will go to the polls to choose their next president. The success of that election and the peaceful inauguration of the next democratically elected head of State will be a critical milestone in consolidating the country's achievements, including with respect to national reconciliation and economic development, since the violent post-elections crisis of 2010-2011. It is essential that all political stakeholders and their constituents continue to engage in the democratic process in a constructive manner to ensure that the October election is free, fair, transparent and peaceful, as well as inclusive.

76. I am therefore encouraged by the continued determination of the Government, under the leadership of President Ouattara, to advance the essential political dialogue and national reconciliation processes, while also making conciliatory gestures towards the political opposition. Such efforts should continue and intensify as the election date approaches and the political stakes become higher. Resolving these issues before the election, a task the Government has set for itself, is critical. However, consolidating the hard-won gains and ensuring that the whole of society shares in the benefits requires that all political actors redouble their efforts aimed at overcoming remaining political and social cleavages, while also messaging the same to their respective constituencies.

77. In the months ahead, all political stakeholders must seize the opportunity to advance a constructive and meaningful dialogue process that will facilitate a peaceful electoral process that should be open to all. A strong democracy requires a vibrant and engaged opposition whose rights are respected, including the right of assembly. I therefore commend the decision of the Government to broaden the base of participation in the forthcoming election, including the decision to provide funding for political parties. I also welcome progress made towards the completion of the legal framework for elections, including the amendment of the electoral code. However, more remains to be done, including with respect to ensuring equitable access to State media for all political actors, and I urge the Government to do its utmost to give the opposition greater access. At the same time, I remain concerned

by the continued use of inflammatory messages in the media, and appeal to all political actors to refrain from using incendiary speech that undermines national reconciliation and social cohesion.

78. The United Nations will support the Ivorian authorities and institutions in their preparations for the electoral process, including through the continued good offices of my Special Representative. I also ask that the Security Council approve the expansion of the UNOCI electoral assistance mandate to include additional tasks, within existing resources, as detailed in my report of 12 December 2014 (S/2014/892). Meanwhile, the United Nations family will continue to support Ivorian stakeholders in creating an environment conducive to a peaceful electoral process, including by helping to facilitate dialogue and working with the national security agencies put in place the necessary security conditions.

79. The armed attacks on communities in the west are deeply troubling, highlighting continuing challenges linked to land rights, intercommunal conflicts and, in some cases, hostility to FRCI. Such attacks have devastating consequences for civilians. It is therefore imperative that national authorities lead in mitigating the threat of such attacks, including with a view to reducing the potential for localized instability during the electoral period.

80. Ensuring the irreversibility of progress in key areas, including national reconciliation, security sector reform, disarmament, decentralization of the administration and the fight against corruption, which are often interconnected, would help to build the confidence of the population in the future of the State and its institutions. That, in turn, would contribute to a political climate conducive to the holding of credible, transparent and peaceful elections, and continued peace thereafter.

81. Côte d'Ivoire has made efforts to bring to justice some of the alleged perpetrators of crimes committed against the State during the post-elections crisis. However, there is still deep concern about perceived "victor's justice", given that the focus has so far been limited to members and associates of the former regime, and there has not yet been any accountability for alleged violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. Truly reconciling the population will require that more efforts be made to demonstrate the fundamental principle of equality before the law. It is therefore critical to take forward investigations and prosecutions against all of those alleged to have committed human rights violations, irrespective of status or political affiliation.

82. I remain deeply troubled by delays in the investigation of major cases, such as the killing in June 2012 of seven United Nations peacekeepers and the attack on the Nahibly camp for internally displaced persons in July 2012. I urge the Government to remain committed to ensuring equitable and impartial justice, and to ensure that perpetrators of serious crimes are brought to justice.

83. I commend the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission for making a series of recommendations that could help take the national reconciliation process forward, including reparations for victims. It is important that effective mechanisms and programmes, with sufficient resources, are established in order to implement those recommendations. I therefore welcome President Ouattara's commitment in that regard, as well as the allocation of an initial tranche of funds to cover reparations to victims. At the same time, I urge the Government to make the report

of the Commission public, as a free and open debate about the country's past could help to shape a better future for all Ivoirians. It is essential that the people and Government of Côte d'Ivoire redouble their efforts to advance reconciliation throughout the country, and at all levels of society. In that regard, I welcome efforts to take forward intercommunal dialogue, which is an important tool for advancing social cohesion and reconciliation between communities.

84. There has been some welcome improvement in the human rights situation, including the inauguration of the first national mechanism aimed at enhancing gender balance in all institutions. However, numerous challenges remain ahead of the October election, and I remain concerned about the reports of exactions committed by security forces, as well as sexual- and gender-based violence, harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation and the kidnapping, mutilation and murder of children. It is essential that the Government and its partners take all the necessary steps to strengthen the national justice system to increase the prosecution of alleged perpetrators of human rights violations, while also adopting measures aimed at protecting the rights of victims. I also implore the Government to ensure respect for the right to due process of all persons in detention.

85. While the justice and corrections system continue to develop, these sectors still need strong assistance aimed at building their capacity. I urge partners to provide such assistance, given that these tasks no longer fall within the mandate of UNOCI. Sustaining peace, security and stability will require that national authorities receive strategic and focused operational support, which should complement ongoing efforts to develop the national police and gendarmerie, as part of a comprehensive approach to the criminal justice chain.

86. The efforts of the Government to restructure and professionalize its defence and security sector are commendable. However, despite progress in the implementation of the national security sector reform programme, challenges remain in building the operational capacity of security providers. Urgent steps must be taken to address the operational shortcomings of the police and gendarmerie, particularly ahead of the October election, including their lack of adequate equipment. The legitimacy and accountability of security institutions remain crucial for the confidence of the population in the security sector.

87. I welcome the ambitious efforts to conclude the disarmament and demobilization of the full caseload of former combatants by June 2015. At the same time, it is important that long-term sustainable solutions are identified and implemented to address the residual caseload of former combatants requiring reinsertion. UNOCI will respond positively to the Ivorian authorities' request to provide continued support for the reinsertion of former combatants after June. At the same time, coordination and the involvement of all relevant partners, including the private sector, should be prioritized by the Government of Côte d'Ivoire.

88. While the closure of land borders and the suspension of cross-border activities, including joint security operations and refugee returns, were logical measures to prevent the spread of Ebola into Côte d'Ivoire, such measures limited prospects for effective cross-border protocols and also posed the risk of creating a security vacuum in the border areas. I therefore welcome the resumption of the quadripartite and tripartite frameworks, as well as plans to restart the voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees. It is also important that the countries of the region assume greater ownership of their bilateral and regional cooperation. In that regard, I welcome the

important steps being taken by ECOWAS member States to address statelessness, and the collective efforts to galvanize efforts to sustainably address Ebola.

89. Progress has been made on many fronts in Côte d'Ivoire, giving rise to optimism. However, many challenges remain. It is absolutely essential to take every precaution to prevent any reversal of the hard-won gains. I therefore recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of UNOCI for a period of one year, until 30 June 2016, with an authorized strength of 5,437 military and 1,500 police personnel, while also expanding the electoral assistance mandate of UNOCI.

90. I wish to express my appreciation for my Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire, Aïchatou Mindaoudou, for her excellent leadership. I also extend my gratitude to all United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel, troop- and police-contributing countries, the African Union, ECOWAS, the Mano River Union and other regional organizations, multilateral and bilateral partners, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, non-governmental organizations and all other partners for their invaluable support to sustaining peace in Côte d'Ivoire.

Annex I

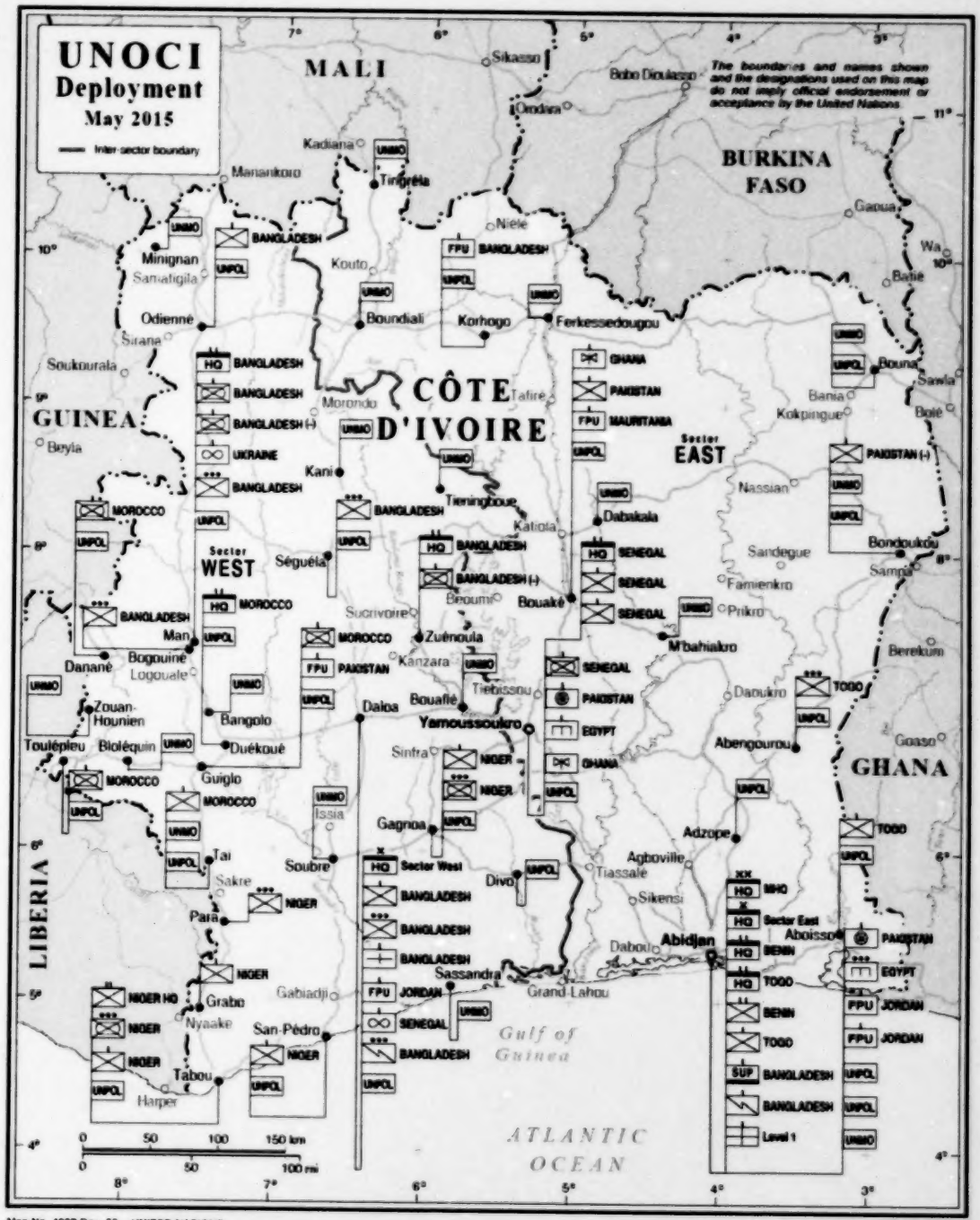
United Nations Mission in Cote d'Ivoire: military and police strength

(As at 1 May 2015)

	Military component				*Police component*	
Country	*Military observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Total*	*Formed police units*	*Police officers*
Bangladesh	13	9	1 434	1 456	180	–
Benin	9	7	370	386	–	54
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	3	–	–	3	–	–
Brazil	3	3	–	6	–	–
Burkina Faso	–	–	–	–	–	54
Burundi	–	–	–	–	–	65
Cameroon	–	–	–	–	–	14
Central African Republic	–	–	–	–	–	6
Chad	4	–	–	4	–	10
China	6	–	–	6	–	–
Djibouti	–	–	–	–	–	16
Democratic Republic of the Congo	–	–	–	–	–	14
Ecuador	2	–	–	2	–	–
Egypt	–	1	175	176	–	25
El Salvador	3	–	–	3	–	–
Ethiopia	2	–	–	2	–	–
France	–	5	–	5	–	7
Gambia	3	–	–	3	–	–
Ghana	6	7	150	163	–	5
Guatemala	5	–	–	5	–	–
Guinea	1	–	–	1	–	–
India	9	–	–	9	–	–
Ireland	2	–	–	2	–	–
Jordan	8	12	–	20	490	11
Kazakhstan	2	–	–	2	–	–
Madagascar	–	–	–	–	–	3
Malawi	3	2	–	5	–	–
Mauritania	–	–	–	–	139	–
Morocco	–	3	715	718	–	–
Namibia	2	–	–	2	–	–
Nepal	3	1	–	4	–	–
Niger	5	4	862	871	–	43
Nigeria	3	–	–	3	–	4

Country	Military component				Police component	
	Military observers	Staff officers	Troops	Total	Formed police units	Police officers
Pakistan	12	15	452	479	190	–
Paraguay	1	2	–	3	–	–
Peru	2	–	–	2	–	–
Poland	1	–	–	1	–	–
Republic of Korea	2	–	–	2	–	–
Republic of Moldova	2	–	–	2	–	–
Romania	6	–	–	6	–	–
Russian Federation	6	–	–	6	–	–
Rwanda	–	–	–	–	–	34
Senegal	7	3	721	731	–	33
Serbia	6	–	–	6	–	–
Spain	–	1	–	1	–	–
Switzerland	–	–	–	–	–	1
Togo	7	6	465	478	–	5
Tunisia	7	3	–	10	–	53
Turkey	–	–	–	–	–	8
Uganda	5	2	–	7	–	–
Ukraine	–	3	31	34	–	12
United Republic of Tanzania	2	2	–	4	–	–
Uruguay	1	–	–	1	–	–
Vanuatu	–	–	–	–	–	3
Yemen	9	1	–	10	–	15
Zambia	1	–	–	1	–	–
Zimbabwe	3	–	–	3	–	–
Total	**177**	**92**	**5 375**	**5 644**	**999**	**495**

Annex II



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